

April 13, 2010



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Dear Friend,

The recent AdvantageWest Economic Summit marked the start of a long list of major events, opportunities and activities across the region this spring. Read on for an overview and more about ways you can benefit.

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## **May 13: Carolina Connect conference focuses on innovation, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship**

*Connect with top business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors at 7th annual event*

The Carolina Connect conference, one of AdvantageWest's most highly anticipated events for entrepreneurs and investors, takes place May 13, offering a full day of networking, professional development and idea-sharing – plus awards recognizing innovation and achievement in entrepreneurship across the region. The event takes place at the Renaissance in downtown Asheville from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a pre-conference networking breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and a post-conference reception, 5 until 6:30 p.m.

Started by AdvantageWest's Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC) in 2003 as the first-ever venture capital conference in Western North Carolina and one of the largest in the state, Carolina Connect attracts several hundred businesspeople each year from across the Southeast. Previous keynote speakers at the conference have included Guy Kawasaki (author of *The Art of the Start* and *Rules for Revolutionaries*), Dan Heath (co-author of *Made to Stick*), and Ryan Allis (the 20-

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### **Corporate Spotlight**

AT&T is a supporter of AdvantageWest's program of work and a supporter of economic development across western North Carolina.

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something multimillionaire founder of iContact).

*Learn more [here](#).*

***AdvantageWest now accepting nominations for innovative entrepreneurs and companies to be awarded during Carolina Connect***

Who in Western North Carolina exemplifies an entrepreneurial spirit, and in doing so, demonstrate excellence and success in areas of innovation, financial performance and personal commitment to their business and community? What company in the AdvantageWest region exhibits a culture of innovation within their corporate infrastructure?

AdvantageWest is seeking nominees for the coveted Lone Eagle Entrepreneur of Excellence Award, now in its fifth year, and the new Innovation Advantage Award, to be presented to a WNC business or industry that demonstrates corporate imagination, innovation and intrapreneurship that increases teamwork, competitive advantage and overall productivity. Nominations are due April 30 and the winners will be announced on May 13 at the 2010 Carolina Connect conference.

*[Nominate an entrepreneur for the Lone Eagle Award.](#)  
[Nominate a business for the Innovation Advantage Award.](#)*

***Get your company's name in front of hundreds of businesspeople:  
Sponsorships now available for Carolina Connect***

AdvantageWest and BREC are now seeking sponsors for the 2010 Carolina Connect conference. The top sponsorship level comes with 10 free tickets to Carolina Connect, along with other perks and prominent recognition.

*Carolina Connect sponsorship information [here](#).*

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**More upcoming events and opportunities –  
mark your calendar today!**

**April 15-18: HATCHfest Asheville**

*Various locations in downtown Asheville*

The second annual mentoring event focuses on the creative industries and how to best leverage creative professions to impact the community and

the planet in a positive and sustainable way, bringing together luminaries in the arts and entertainment world to serve as mentors to groundbreaking new creative talent, including Jeff Chu, a journalist at [Fast Company](#).

*Speakers and full schedule [here](#).*

**April 15, 2 pm: AdvantageWest Board of Directors Meeting**

*Location: DoubleTree Biltmore, 115 Hendersonville Road in Asheville, Room Burghley A*

Normally held at the AdvantageWest offices adjacent to the Asheville Regional Airport, the bimonthly meeting of the 19-member volunteer Board of Directors will be take place at the DoubleTree Biltmore due to construction on the roads around the AdvantageWest offices. Meetings are open to the public.

*Information: 828.687.7234*

**April 16, 8-11am: "Our Kids...Our Future" Town Hall Meeting**

*Location: Blue Ridge Community College Conference Hall, Flat Rock*

The United Agenda for Children, led by a coalition of citizens, civic leaders, businesses, government and community agencies who have organized to make sure every child in Henderson County is safe, healthy and well-educated, presents this town hall meeting designed to focus attention and action on early childhood development needs of children in Henderson County. Speakers include Lt. Governor Walter Dalton and other presenters of state and national reputation. Event is preceded by a continental breakfast at 7:30am.

*More information and to register, go [here](#).*

**April 19, 9am – 1pm: Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton's JOBS Commission Meeting**

*Location: Highsmith University Union (Alumni Hall), UNC Asheville*

Lt. Governor Walter Dalton's Joining Our Businesses and Schools (JOBS) Commission is meeting business, education and community leaders and the general public at UNC Asheville, with logistics being coordinated with assistance from AdvantageWest. The 20-member JOBS Commission is charged with making recommendations to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly about how the state's early college high schools can align themselves more closely with the economic development needs of their regions, are invited to the discussion. The commission is also focusing on enhancing Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education in the public school system. For details on attending or participating in the meeting, contact AdvantageWest.

*Information: 828.687.7234 or 919.733.7350*

**April 19, 5:30-7pm: Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute Town Hall – Energy Financing for Asheville & Buncombe**

*Location: Public Works Bldg., 161 S. Charlotte St., Asheville*

This special Green Monday event will explore the opportunities and challenges of the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Bonds, an initiative that allows local governments to provide loans to businesses and homeowners to make energy efficiency improvements. The interactive forum will include panelists representing the Community Energy Action Council, the Environmental Finance Center at UNC School of Government, Buncombe County Commissioners and Asheville City Council.

*More information [here](#), or contact [Janna Zonder](#) at 828-505-3547.*

**April 20, 8:30am-4:30pm: Food Marketing in the Real World – A Training & Networking Opportunity for Food Entrepreneurs**

*Location: WNC Ag Center, Fletcher*

Small food producers (or those interested in becoming one) are encouraged to attend this class to learn new opportunities to expand your business, hear from successful food professionals, learn how to reach new markets, and network with other food entrepreneurs. Sponsored by the Division of Marketing of the NC Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services. Space is limited and preregistration is required.

*More information [here](#).*

**April 26-27: Supporting Sustainable Communities Project – Opportunities and Challenges for Community Colleges**

*Location: Crowne Plaza Resort, Asheville*

AdvantageWest is a sponsor of an international symposium bringing together experts and practitioners from the US and Europe to highlight expanded roles for colleges in educating students, businesses, and communities about and for economic opportunities in renewable energy, conservation, ecotourism, and local sustainable agriculture and manufacturing. The event is hosted by Haywood Community College and the Trans-Atlantic Technology & Training Alliance. Attendees at the

conference will have not only the chance to learn about best practices world-wide they will have the chance to network with peers from community colleges, economic development, businesses and nonprofits.

*Speakers, agenda and registration information [here](#).*

**May 11-12: InnoVenture Southeast 2010 Venture Conference**

*Location: Carolina First Center, Greenville SC*

Entering its seventh year, InnoVenture Southeast 2010 will feature seven senior leaders and 60 passionate champions describing the future they are creating. Dubbed "InnoVenture Southeast 2010: The Future We Are Creating Here," each presenter is seeking to attract the customers, capital, talent and technology they need to succeed. Presenters are organized in four areas: clean energy, advanced materials, transformed automobiles, and smart communities.

*More information and a list of speakers and presenters [here](#).*

**June 23: Mountain Green Sustainable Communities Conference**

*Location: Warren Wilson College, Asheville*

AdvantageWest is a lead sponsor of this daylong conference organized by the Environmental Leadership Center at Warren Wilson College, which will showcase construction and design strategies for those serving the aged population; residential design elements that are sustainable; and engineering strategies for managing wastewater. Conference with keynote speakers, concurrent breakout sessions, a business expo and ample networking opportunities, runs 8am-5pm, with a post-conference reception from 5-6:30pm, hosted by Asheville Home Builders Association.

*Speakers, registration, and vendor information [here](#).*

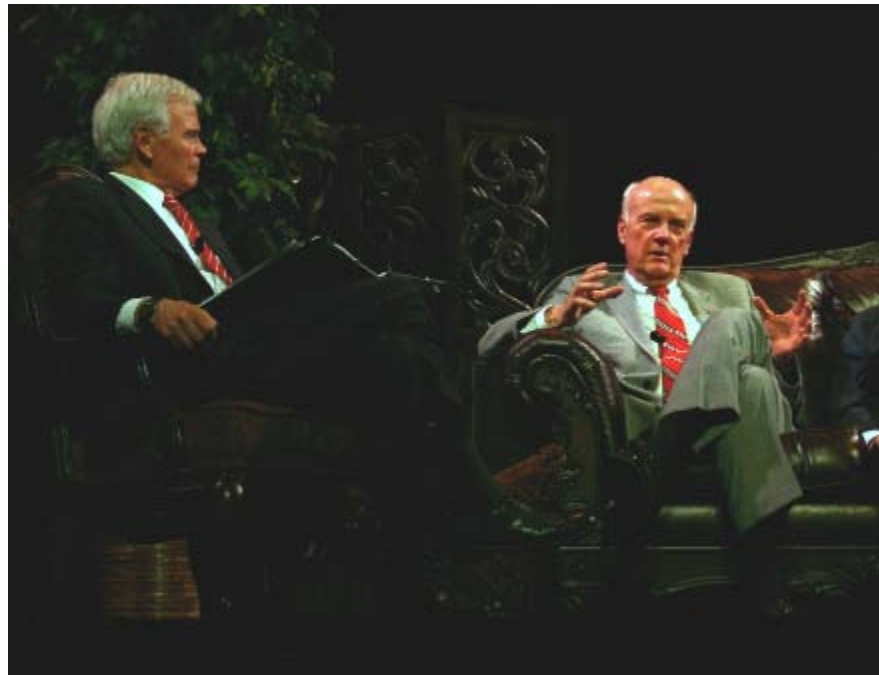
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**Thanks to sponsors and participants,  
AdvantageWest Economic Summit is a  
success**

Thanks to enthusiastic attendees from across the region and a lineup of some of the state's most experienced and knowledgeable leaders in business, education and public service, the first AdvantageWest

Economic Summit was a great success. Nearly 350 businesspeople, entrepreneurs, economic development professionals, and elected and appointed leaders gathered on March 29 at Pack Place in downtown Asheville for networking and a discussion of the new economy.

Our thanks to the following sponsors of the event: AT&T, Piedmont Natural Gas, McGill Associates, PSAV Presentation Services, the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), Biltmore Wines, Ashley Furniture Home Store, MARC, Allegra Printing, and Posana Café.



*Panelists for the AdvantageWest Economic Summit included NC Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco, shown at right, with UNC-TV television host and the panel moderator D.G. Martin.*

Miss the Economic Summit? View a recording [here](#).  
Read a Mountain Xpress article about the event [here](#).

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## **Asheville Regional Airport launches daily nonstop to Dallas/Ft. Worth**

Asheville Regional Airport has launched a new daily nonstop to Dallas/Ft. Worth on American Airlines regional affiliate, American

Eagle. The 44-seat Embraer ERJ-140 aircraft departs daily from AVL at 9:40 a.m., and arrives back in Asheville at 8:45 p.m. "We are pleased to partner with American in creating a link from Asheville to the American Airlines network," said AVL Airport Director Lew Bleiweis. "This opens the door to a wide array of travel opportunities for residents of, as well as visitors to, Asheville and the Western North Carolina region." Dallas/Ft. Worth is the fourth new destination acquired by Asheville Regional Airport in less than a year, adding to Chicago (ORD), Orlando (MCO), and New York City (LGA). Travelers can book tickets at [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com) and [www.flyavl.com](http://www.flyavl.com).

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## **US Senator Kay Hagan gets a tour – and taste – of Blue Ridge Food Ventures**



*Blue Ridge Food Ventures Executive Director Mary Lou Surgi recently led US Senator Kay Hagan on a tour of the 11,000 sq. ft. facility, which was North Carolina's first business incubator specifically designed to provide services to farmers and food entrepreneurs. This year, Blue Ridge Food Ventures is celebrating five years of providing services to farmers, food entrepreneurs and, now, natural products manufacturers. Sen. Hagan is shown here (center) with Exec. Director Surgi and AdvantageWest Board Chairman Tommy Jenkins.*

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## **Discounted ad space available in a special Western NC section in Business North Carolina magazine**

*Space deadline is May 21 for July publication*

AdvantageWest is partnering with Business North Carolina on a special section in the July 2010 edition that will focus on our region of the state. With more than 100,000 of North Carolina's most influential, senior-level business executives reading this publication every month, this is an attractive opportunity for WNC businesses to increase their visibility and help us present a complete view of the exciting and progressive happenings throughout our region. Space reservations are due by May 21; the deadline for ad materials is May 28. Business North Carolina, the only statewide business magazine, is offering discounted rates for this special report. Learn more from Business North Carolina ad rep Tom Bossard [here](#) or by calling 704.523.6987, ext 234.

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### **In the news**

***Asheville Citizen-Times: Gov. Bev Perdue announces incentives for helping small companies.*** AdvantageWest Board Chairman Tommy Jenkins introduced Gov. Perdue at her downtown Asheville press conference on April 9. [Read the story here.](#) [View a photo gallery from the event here.](#)



Photo by Erin Brethauer, copyright [Asheville Citizen-Times](#)

**LA Times: Film uses unique talents of WNC man.** Longtime film industry professional Dan Hydrick of WNC takes on a special challenge for the feature film, "Dear John" – teaching a child with autism to ride. [Read the story here.](#)

**Sync: Town of Granite Falls awarded \$500,000.** The Industrial Development Fund grant will assist in the construction of a water tank for Merchants Distributors Inc (MDI) and will enable MDI to create up to 150 high-paying jobs over the next five years. [Read the story here.](#)

**Barron's: WNC is among "best places to buy a second home."** The market for luxury real estate is coming back to life, according to Barron's magazine. [Read the story here.](#)

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## Got news?

We welcome your announcements about economic development activities within the 23-county region of Western North Carolina. Submit news and photos for possible inclusion to AdvantageWest newsletter editor Kathi Petersen at [kpetersen@awnc.org](mailto:kpetersen@awnc.org). AdvantageWest reserves the right to modify submissions to conform to editorial guidelines, space

constraints, timeliness and other circumstances.

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Stay tuned for more economic development news from AdvantageWest. [Questions, comments or observations about this newsletter?](#) [Have a regional event or update you'd like us to share?](#)

Visit our websites: [AdvantageWest Economic Development Group](#), [Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council \(BREC\)](#), [MountainSouth USA](#), and our strategic partners the [Blue Ridge National Heritage Area](#), the [Blue Ridge Angel Investors Network](#) and the [NC Department of Commerce](#).

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